

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act



Effective Education for Homeless Children and Youth
in Vermont

Vermont Department of Education

August 2008



This PowerPoint Presentation can be used as:

- A self tutorial for Homeless Education Liaisons in Vermont schools
- A training tool for individuals and small groups
- A web based resource for education and community service providers serving homeless students and their families



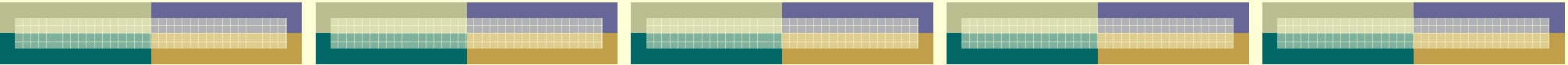
The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act...

- Maintains educational continuity during a time of transition
- Requires schools to identify and enroll students who meet the definition of homeless
- Is authorized under the “No Child Left Behind Act”



What is the definition of a Homeless Student?

A homeless student is an individual who lacks a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence.



A student may be homeless as a result of eviction, economic hardship, divorce, illness, natural disaster, domestic violence or other reasons and may be living in:

- Shared housing (doubled up)
- Motels, hotels, camp grounds
- Shelters or emergency housing
- Cars, parks, or other public places that are not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations



What is the definition of an Unaccompanied Youth?

An Unaccompanied Youth who is considered
homeless is someone who is not in the physical
custody of a parent or guardian
and
who meets the criteria for homelessness in the
definition



How are schools required to serve homeless students?

- Every supervisory union must designate a homeless education liaison to the Vermont Department of Education
- Identify and immediately enroll homeless students based on the best interest of the child and the preference of the parent or unaccompanied youth
- Transport student to school of origin (if appropriate)

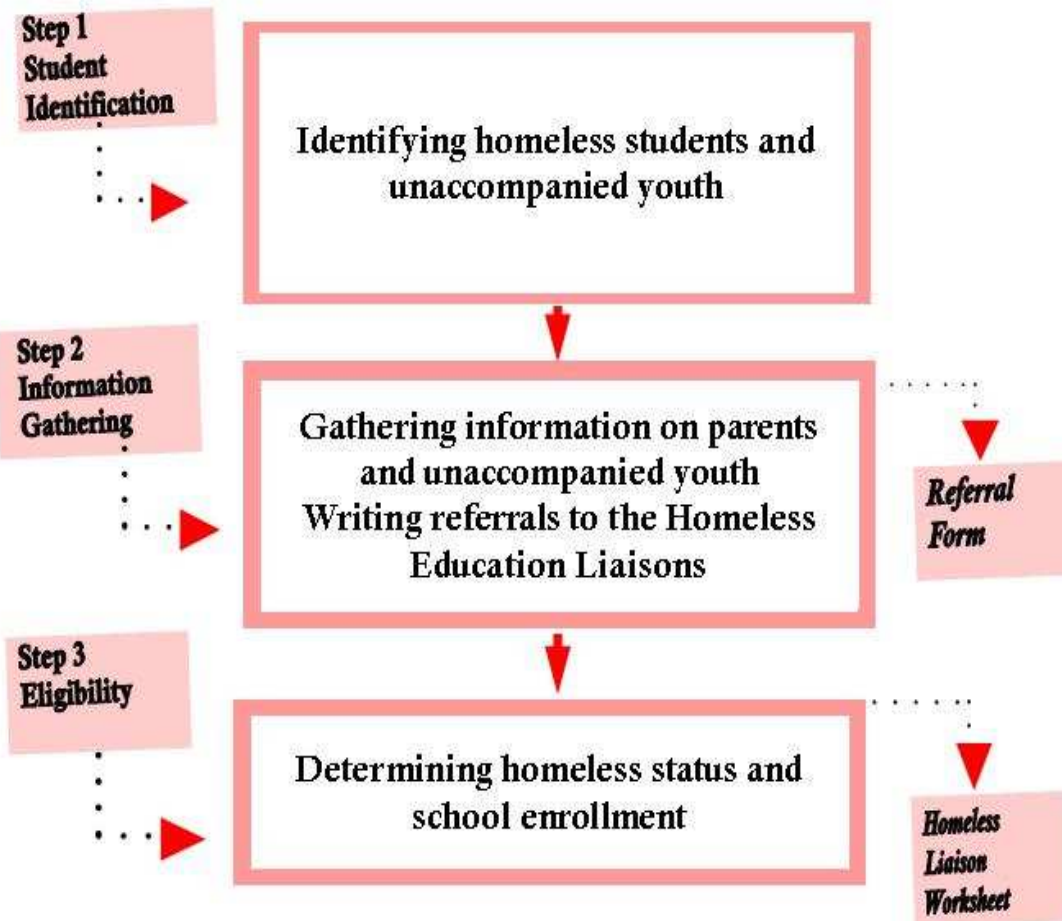


What are Homeless Education Liaisons required to do?

- Facilitate identification and enrollment by knowing the law, train school staff and display parent/youth posters in each school
- Make sure that homeless students receive transportation (if appropriate), free meals, Title I and early education services...and all other services available to non-homeless students
- Link homeless students to appropriate services in both the school and the community

How do we “Get It Right” regarding identification and enrollment?

Getting It Right: Identification and Enrollment of Homeless Children and Youth





How do we identify and enroll homeless students?

1. Ensure that school personnel know how to identify and refer students to the Homeless Education Liaison by using the “*Referral Form*”

Referral to Homeless Education Liaison

(For individual supervisory union/school district use only. Do not submit to the Vermont Department of Education)

Date: _____

Person Making Referral: _____

School/Agency and Position: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Student Information:

I have identified a student who may be experiencing homelessness (*lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence*) and would like to make a referral to the Homeless Education Liaison.

Student(s) Name(s): _____

School in which student was last enrolled: _____

Student's current address: _____

Student's Phone #: _____

Reason for Referral: *Please check and provide details if available.*

- ☐ Shelter Resident
- ☐ Shared Housing (Doubled Up)
- ☐ Motel or Hotel Resident
- ☐ Campground/Tent
- ☐ Unaccompanied Youth (*not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacking a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence*)
- ☐ Other: _____

Liaison Information:

Supervisory Union/School District: _____

Homeless Education Liaison: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Date Liaison received referral: _____



How do we identify and enroll homeless students?

2. Use the “*Homeless Liaison Worksheet*” to determine homeless status and school enrollment

Homeless Liaison Worksheet: Determining Homeless Status and School Enrollment

(For individual supervisors/school/agency use only. Does not replace VT Department of Education)

Person Completing Worksheet _____ Date _____

Job Title _____ School/Agency _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

This worksheet guides you through the process of determining homeless status and school enrollment options for students in your supervisory union. School enrollment decisions are made based on the best interest of the student and to the extent feasible would keep a child in the school of origin unless doing so would conflict with the parent/youth request.

The homeless status of a student would be decided by the liaison in the supervisory union that serves the area where the student is currently living. The process of determining school enrollment should be student centered and take into account factors such as:

-  Age of the child or youth
-  Distance of a commute
-  Safety issues
-  Student's need for special instruction
-  Length of the anticipated stay in temporary shelter or other temporary location, and
-  Time remaining in the school year

If you decide to enroll a homeless student in a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/youth, you must provide a written explanation of your decision. Step 4 of this worksheet guides you in that process.

To assist in identifying homeless students, include a question on your school enrollment form asking if the family has "housing issues" and make sure that homeless information posters are posted and visible to all students and families.

To document your work with homeless students and to comply with federal regulations, worksheets and referral forms should be kept in the "Simple Information System" notebook, available to all Homeless Education Liaisons through the Vermont Department of Education. Please contact Lisa Cavanaugh at lisa.cavanaugh@vermont.edu or (802) 828-6574.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Age	Schools Attended	Grade	IEP	504	Regular Ed	Ed Support Team	Other



How do we identify and enroll homeless students?

3. Make sure school registration forms request information on “housing issues” and that *“Homeless Information Posters”* for parents and youth are prominently displayed

Information for Parents

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, your preschool-aged and school-aged children have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your children have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education, including preschool education, provided to other children.
- Continue in the school they attended before you became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. If a school sends your child to a school other than the one you request, the school must provide you with a written explanation and offer you the right to appeal the decision.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless or the school they last attended, if you or a guardian request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrolling your children.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling your child in a new school or arranging for your child to continue in his or her former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Contact the school and provide any information you think will assist the teachers in helping your child adjust to new circumstances.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

Local Area Contacts:

State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the National Center for Homeless Education at the toll-free HelpLine number:

1-800-308-2145



Information for School-Aged Youth

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, you have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

You have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. You must be given access to the same public education provided to other students.
- Continue in the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. The school district's local liaison for homeless education must assist you, if needed, and offer you the right to appeal a decision regarding your choice of school if it goes against your wishes.
- Receive transportation to the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended, if you request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with students who are not homeless. Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrollment.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other students served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling in a new school or arranging to continue in your former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Tell your teachers anything that you think they need to know to help you in school.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

Local Area Contacts:

State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the National Center for Homeless Education at the toll-free HelpLine number:

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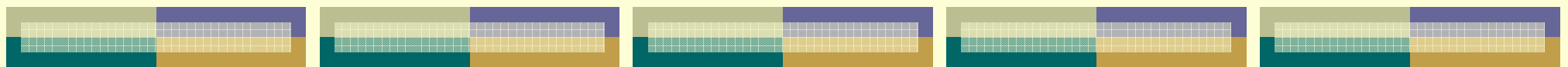




Resources to support your work with homeless students in Vermont

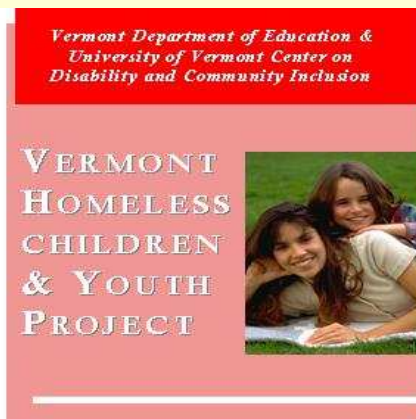
The Vermont Homeless Children and Youth Project (VHCYP) staff provides training and technical assistance to schools and community service providers.

The VHCYP brochure is available on the Vermont Department of Education Homeless Education website at: www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_homeless.html



The Vermont Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, marital status, sex, disability, age or sexual orientation in its programs or activities.

Vermont Homeless Children & Youth Project
Vermont Department of Education
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Montpelier, VT 05620-2501



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(802) 828-5108

What is the Vermont Homeless Children and Youth Project?

THE VERMONT HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROJECT (VHCYP) is a federally funded project administered through University of Vermont Center on Disability and Community Inclusion "(CDCI)" from the Vermont Department of Education to carry out the provisions of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act. VHCYP provides technical assistance and support in six regions to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness will continue to receive educational services.

VHCYP staff members work with schools, community organizations, families, and youth to provide information on federal and state laws that address the special needs of homeless children and youth.

To ensure that homeless children and youth have the same access to a free appropriate public education, VHCYP staff members work with schools and community-based service providers to ensure homeless students have access to:

- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, (such as Title I, Special Education, Section 504, English as a Second Language)
- Preschool programs, including Head Start and Even Start Family Literacy Programs
- Technical education
- Gifted and talented programs
- School meal programs

In addition to working with schools, VHCYP staff members work with agencies and programs that provide services to homeless children and youth and their families, including homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth shelters, and transitional living programs for homeless youth.

The **VHCYP staff** can support your work with homeless students by:

- Answering questions and providing technical assistance
- Developing training for school and agency personnel
- Attending staff meetings and meetings with families and unaccompanied youth
- Providing assistance in resolving enrollment disputes

The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This legislation requires that all homeless children and youth have the same access to a free, appropriate public education as other children and youth in Vermont. The goals of this legislation include:

- Identifying homeless children and youth
- Immediate enrollment and facilitation of enrollment disputes
- Ensuring access to school and appropriate educational services
- Reducing school transfers and supporting educational stability and continuity
- Increasing parental choice and involvement regarding school enrollment
- Ensuring the educational rights of unaccompanied youth, and
- Providing information about the rights of homeless children and youth



Who Is Homeless?

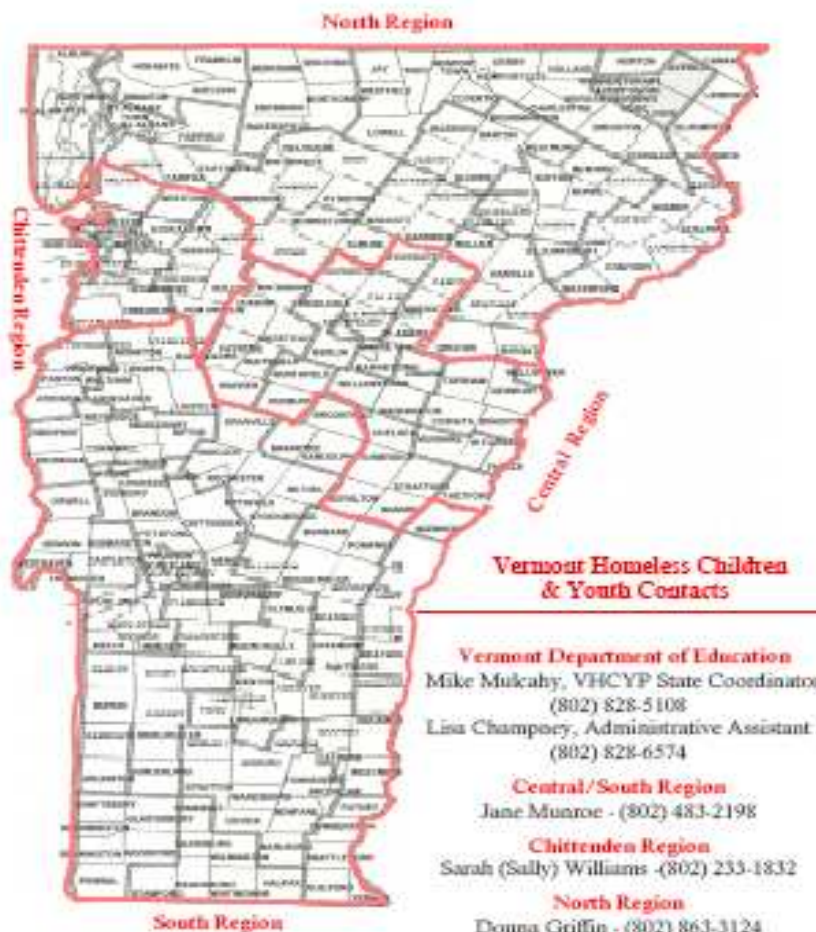
According to the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a homeless person is an individual who lacks a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence, including children and youth:

- Sharing housing due to loss of permanent housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate housing
- Living in emergency or transitional housing
- Abandoned in a hospital
- Awaiting foster care placement

This includes children and youth who:

- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations
- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing bus or train stations
- Migratory students meeting the descriptions above

An **unaccompanied youth** who is considered homeless is someone who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who meets the above criteria.



Visit the Education for Homeless Children and Youth website at:

[http://
education.vermont.gov/new/
html/pgm_homeless.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_homeless.html)



For additional information, contact:

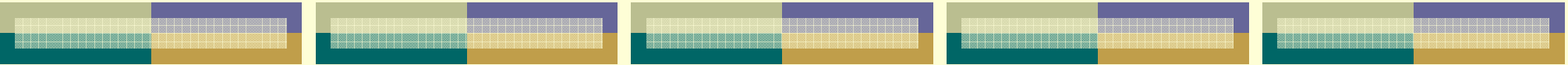
Mike Mulcahy, VHCYP State Coordinator
Vermont Homeless Children & Youth Project
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(802) 828-5108

Vermont Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont
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Additional Resources to support your work with homeless students in Vermont

The McKinney Vento “Red Informational Packet” is distributed to all Homeless Education Liaisons in September of each year and is available upon request by contacting Lisa Champney at the Vermont Department of Education at (802) 828-6574 or lisa.champney@state.vt.us



This PowerPoint Presentation, a list of all Vermont Homeless Education Liaisons and all informational materials can be found on the Vermont DOE Homeless Education website at:

www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_homeless.html